



SAVING REEFS WORLDWIDE
EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSERVATION

1/27/2006

Blue Ribbon Task Force
MLPA Initiative
Submitted Electronically: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov

RE: Comments on Agenda Items 8 and 9 (monitoring framework and long-term funding)

Dear Chair Isenberg and Blue Ribbon Task Force members,

While we recognize that briefing documents 13 and 15 are not officially available for comment, we thought it prudent to submit our comments in writing to help streamline the agenda for the January 2006 BRTF meeting. We find the Draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptive Management Framework to be comprehensive and we are pleased to see that the importance of volunteer monitoring is recognized. Although in its infancy, the Reef Check California volunteer monitoring program is underway and we request it be included in Table 5 (p. 60) as a research and monitoring program in the study area.

Specifically designed to support MLPA monitoring needs, our monitoring program has undergone rigorous peer review and we will initiate sampling this spring on the central coast. We are following the development and selection of alternative networks closely and we request your guidance as we develop and implement the sampling network so we can maximize the effectiveness of new sampling locations.

In addition to monitoring, the educational components of the program will help build a constituency supportive of science-based management and we will use the program to coordinate existing sampling efforts. Coordination is vital to help address the challenges associated with data quality assurance and control outlined in the Draft Framework. We welcome any suggestion you have to further increase the efficacy of the program to meet the goals outlined in the Draft Framework and invite you to join us to participate in, or observe, one of our upcoming trainings this spring.

Regarding briefing item 15, Long-term Funding for the MLPA, we urge you to strongly support the use of partners to perform activities required to implement the MLPA (Item 3, p. 4). Partnerships will not only ease the burden for CDFG but will directly involve a much larger constituency in implementation, monitoring, education, and adaptive management of the new network of MPAs.

Thank you for your tremendous dedication and hard work on this most important initiative.

Sincerely,

Craig Shuman, D. Env.
Director, Reef Check California Program